

5 August, 2005
James R. Geisinger, K3QQN
252 Rocky Mount Road
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23452-3316
James254@cox.net

The Federal Communications Commission
Washington D.C.

Dear Sir:

This comment addresses my concerns that the modification to Part 97 of the FCC Amateur Radio Rules ending the requirement for a test in the sending and reception of Morse Code NOT be passed into law. Notice of Proposed Rulemaking 05-235 applies.

I have been a licensed Amateur Radio Operator since receiving my Novice in 1958, with the exception of part of my year of grace period until I was able to pass the General test. One of my main stumbling blocks to passage was the morse code test given by loudspeaker at the FCC office in Baltimore. It all sounded like one continuous tone in that big room. However, since that time, I have enjoyed thousands of hours on the air and off in hobby related activities. I have won several awards for Community Service for operations during disasters such as Hurricane Camille, Hurricane Celia, a cardiac emergency at sea, and several others. Through all of this, the overriding advantage I have had was a thorough knowledge of operating procedures and a disciplined approach to communications. In several occasions, my ability to copy and send morse code was the difference between success and failure. Code will get you through in spite of interference, fading, low power with weak signal, bad antenna, or any one of a number of other reasons. Thanks to the skills of the operators on the other end, I was able to pass needed traffic even when they couldn't understand what I said using voice modes.

I cannot think of any other GOOD reason to not drop this requirement. I can honestly say that the requirement to pass the test was a difficult hurdle. Had it not been a requirement, I probably would not have bothered. Now, there are many modes that were not available to us in the early years of the hobby. Hams come from all walks of life and have many different interests. But, this one thing binds us together in a world wide fraternity of skilled and serious minded radio operators and technicians. History has shown that most of the electronics community major technological developments have been first initiated and tested by skilled Hams. My main FEAR is that to dilute that skilled and educated group of people with those who just want to "play" on the air using current new technology would stifle that group of serious minded men and women who will carry technology further into the 21st century.

My opinion and my fervent hope is that The Commissioners will look into the future and back to the past to see that Amateur Radio is much more than just a group of people who "play" with radio. Our ability to fulfill our mission of public service to the Nation and the very future of our service to humanity depends upon defeat of this measure.

Thank you for considering my appeal.

Very Respectfully,
James R. Geisinger